[Constitution as of 1949]

641 Art. 126. In order to ensure to citizens freedom of conscience, the church
655 in the Russian SFSR is separated from the state and the school from the church.
Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens.

Art. 129. In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the Russian SFSR are guaranteed by law:

(a) Freedom of speech;
(b) Freedom of the press;
(c) Freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings;
(d) Freedom of street processions and demonstrations.

These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of the working people and their organizations printing presses, stocks of paper, public buildings, the streets, communications facilities and other material requisites for the exercise of these rights.

[675] Art. 130. In conformity with the interests of the working people and in order to develop the organizational initiative and political activity of the masses of the people, citizens of the Russian SFSR are ensured the right to unite in public organizations -- trade unions, co-operative associations, youth organizations, sport and defence organizations, cultural, technical and scientific societies; and the most active and politically conscious citizens in the ranks of the working class and other sections of the working people unite in the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), which is the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to strengthen and develop the socialist system and is the leading core of all organizations of the working people, both public and State.

[694] Art. 131. Citizens of the Russian SFSR are guaranteed inviolability of the person. No person may be placed under arrest except by decision of a court or with the sanction of a procurator.

Art. 132. The inviolability of the homes of citizens and privacy of correspondence are protected by law.

Art. 133. The Russian SFSR affords the right of asylum to foreign citizens persecuted for defending the interests of the working people, or for their scientific activities, or for their struggle for national liberation.

Art. 134. It is the duty of every citizen of the Russian SFSR to abide by the Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, to observe the laws, to maintain labour discipline, honestly to perform public duties, and to respect the rules of socialist intercourse.

[695] Art. 135. It is the duty of every citizen of the Russian SFSR to safeguard
[421] and strengthen public socialist property as the sacred and inviolable foundation of the Soviet system, as the source of the wealth and might of the country, as the source of the prosperity and culture of all the working people.

Persons committing offences against public socialist property are enemies of the people.

Art. 136. Universal military service is law.

Military service in the ranks of the armed forces of the USSR is an honourable duty of the citizens of the Russian SFSR.

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[XVth century]

175 allies were also the local boyars who were traditionally always ready, at the critical moment, to abandon their own local princes and rush to join the ascending power.

[795] In the middle of the fifteenth century, the representatives of the Church of Byzantium, in the hope of obtaining the Pope's help against the Turks, agreed to a union with Rome. However, in Moscow, whose power was ascending in the face of the disintegrating Mongol Empire and where the Turks were not considered a threat, no need was felt for any Latin help. Thus the Metropolitan of Moscow who gave his approval for the union with Rome was deposed and the Russian Church was declared autocephalous and independent of the Greek Patriarch. This break with the Byzantine Church was of far-reaching consequences. It placed the Russian Church into a completely dependent position on the Grand Prince of Moscow. From now on, the objectives of the Russian state and those of the Russian Church became inseparable.

• [659]

175 795 Another international event, the fall of Constantinople (1453), removed the last ideological barrier to the growth of the Muscovite Principality into a world empire. Since the seat of the Greek Patriarch had fallen into the hands of the infidels, Moscow became the strongest and the leading Eastern-Orthodox state thus inheriting the Messianic ideology of world salvation and of a Universal Orthodox Empire.

In accordance with such traditions the Russian clergy began to consider Moscow as the only true successor of the first and of the second Rome, as the only depositor of the True Faith, and as the center of a Messianic politico-religious Orthodoxy. By the beginning of the sixteenth century this ideology of the "Third Rome" was fully developed. The Grand Prince of Moscow had already adopted the title of Czar (Caesar). At that time a monk of one of the old monastaries of Pskov stated this idea in a letter to Czar Vasili III, in the following manner:

[186] Two Romes have now fallen, and the third one, our Moscow, yet standeth, and a fourth shall there never be. In thy puissant Empire the council of our church doth shine throughout all the world with the light of holiness which is greater even than the light of the sun. In all the world thou alone art the Christian Tzar.[8]

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II

Following Byzantine traditions and being entirely dependent upon and identified with the dominant political power, the Russian Orthodox clergy supported the autocratic reign of Muscovite rulers by means of an apotheosis of the Czar. According to this theocratic ideology the role of the Church was to be the loyal ally and helper of the Czar who derived his authority directly from God. The Czar's judgment could be overruled by no prelate. In his effort, common with that of the Church to establish a divine order on the whole earth, the Czar had to be unconditionally supported.*

Native Russian, Byzantine and Turco-Mongol institutions and concepts were blended in this system of Russian imperial theocracy. According to the Mongol idea of imperial power the emperor was the owner of the body and of the property of each one of his subjects. He was, however, disinterested in their souls and conscience. Thus, as far as religious beliefs were concerned, the Mongol rulers showed a great deal of tolerance; being interested mainly in collecting the tributes and not in governing they did not look at religion and clergy as allies in ruling. The shamans among the Ural-Altaic peoples were not organized as a priestly class and the Mongol emperor, even after he had accepted Islam, did not see any potential threat to his imperial power in any religion. In that system of power there was a complete separation of religion and politics.

In Byzantium, on the other hand, the Church was a powerful and well-organized force with imperial ambitions. But the Church was subdued to the imperial and personal interests of the lay ruler. The Church often succeeded, however, in using the imperial power for its own ends. At the same time the Byzantine Emperor in legal theory did not rule in his own right, but derived his authority from the people. In legal theory, he was an elected monarch and was subjected to the supreme rule of law, even if the law emanated from him. There was thus in Byzantium a well established set of laws which bound equally the Emperor and his subjects and guaranteed also certain rights to the subjects.

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Speaking of the character of the peasants Mr. Karnovitch observed, that whoever has to exercise authority over them must above all things guard against indecision, whether in word or act. The Russian always requires a definite command; and in disputes, if the settlement be distinct and pre-emptory, he will be satisfied, whether the sentence is favorable or unfavorable, wise or unwise. If there be hesitation, he immediately becomes intractable, while a resolute command has a magical influence which he cannot resist.[21]

In such a society which is kept together by naked force rather than by moral bonds, breakdown of controls easily results in revolt and upheavals, in widespread bloodshed and destruction. On such occasions, just like the raznochintsy intelligentsia, the peasants, too, tended to revolt against all forms of humiliation and oppressive submission and demanded reestablishment of the old community relations, in which truth and justice and equalitarian brotherhood of man prevailed.

Such forms of peasant protest, which were directed against all the authorities, the family, community elders, the landlord, the Church and the state, will be discussed on the following pages.

18
RELIGIOUS REVOLT OF THE PEASANTRY

I

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH which in the course of its history came to be completely subjected to the state and was made an instrument of governing, supported the lay authorities in their policies of enserfment. But the state had meagerly rewarded the Church for such services. The revenues from the land donations given to the parishes by the state or by the landlords were not sufficient to maintain the parish priests and their families. The village priests therefore depended for their living upon the fees which the peasants

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Russian people and became its very life. But the Byzantine character of Russian religion was conserved. As we have already seen the Russian Church was for long dependent upon Constantinople. Its literature consisted of translations or imitations of Byzantine writings. Its Metropolitan was a Greek consecrated in Constantinople and sent to rule the Russian Church. The two exceptions provided by the appointment in Russia of Hilarion in 1051 and Clement in 1147 are regarded as isolated cases which did not impair the theory and change the practice, which held good till 1448.

Politically the Russians lived for a century and a half under Mongol domination. From the battle of Kalka in 1223 the onslaughts of these mysterious, hideous and inhuman hordes, suddenly appearing from whence no man knew, burning, killing, capturing, had struck terror into the hearts of the dwellers on the Russian plain. Kiev, the cradle of Russian Christianity, the ancient and beautiful stronghold on the Dnieper, was sacked in 1240, and one by one the rest of the Russian towns speedily succumbed. Novgorod alone escaped, protected by its remote situation behind its marshes and forests, and by the courage, self-sacrifice and political wisdom of its prince, St. Alexander Nevsky. The Tartar rule bore less heavily upon the Church than upon the State. When their victory was assured the Tartars were at first, in matters of religion, easy-going pagans, and so long as they received their tribute, did not interfere unduly with the religion of the people they conquered. And as was also to be the case later on with the Balkan peoples under the Turk, it was their religion and their Church which, in the days of social and political disaster, saved the Russians from complete despair and preserved among them some sense of fundamental unity in spite of all their factions and divisions.

The Russian Church was the nurse of the growing national spirit of Russia. In the person of one of its great national saints, Sergius of Radonezh, who founded the Monastery of the Holy Trinity near Moscow, for centuries the citadel of Russian religion and national aspiration, it inspired the movement which thrust back the Tartar domination. In 1380 Dmitry of the Don, whose building of stone walls round Moscow had been a challenging gesture to which the Tartars were not slow

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Thus Church and State developed side by side and often worked harmoniously together. As time went on, however, the Metropolitan came to be more and more dependent upon the Tsar, who on more than one occasion dispensed with the form of election altogether and frankly appointed his chief bishop himself, a course of action for which Constantinople had supplied precedents. A case in point is that of the Metropolitan Daniel, and it is involved in the controversy between the Possessors and the Non-possessors which divided ecclesiastics in sixteenth-century Russia.

The Non-possessors desired a reform of the monasteries and in particular disapproved of the possession of landed property by monks whose vow of poverty, they held, should apply corporately as well as individually. They were led by scholars and mystics like Maxim the Greek and Nil Sorsky. The Possessors, under Joseph of Volokalamsk, while holding the opposite opinion on the subject of monastic property, were supporters of the steadily increasing autocracy of the Tsar, whereas their opponents took a more liberal and humane view both about the authority of the State and about the exercise of discipline upon heretics, whom Joseph and his friends felt little compunction in calling upon the secular arm to destroy. The Tsar Vasili III was childless and proposed to divorce his wife and marry another woman. The Metropolitan Barlaam whose sympathies inclined to the Non-possessors refused to sanction this or to perform the ceremony. He paid for his principles by life imprisonment in a monastery, and a pliant Possessor was found in the person of Daniel whom Vasili made Metropolitan in his place and by whom the new marriage was solemnized. Moralists have not failed to point out that the fruit of this marriage was Ivan the Terrible.

The dispute between the Possessors and Non-possessors went on. Some legal adjustments were introduced into the hitherto unrestricted right to bequeath lands to the religious houses. The celebrated Council of the Hundred Chapters or Stoglav[1] which met in 1551 enacted certain reforming measures,

[1] *Sto* means one hundred, and *glav* means chapter. The enactments of the Council were divided into a hundred chapters. Hence the name Stoglav, which is applied both to the document and to the Council which produced it.

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some of which were concerned with the monastic life. But the core of the Council was conservative and it set the seal of its sanction upon the general pattern of Russian life. It authorized a revision of the Service books, though little came of the authorization. It pronounced in favour of the old Russian customs in making the sign of the Cross and the singing of Alleluia. All these were matters which were to give much trouble to the Patriarch Nikon later on (see below, p. 103).

The differences between the Possessors and Non-possessors on the ethical and humanitarian sides of their controversy remained unresolved, and in general Nil Sorsky failed to establish the ideals he desired in Russian monastic life, and to secure the acceptance of more humane principles in the treatment of heretics. In this respect perhaps he lived before his time. More than a century later two deacons whose wives had died of the plague had forsaken their ministry and married again. They were sent to prison to be kept without food until they perished, and only escaped this fate through the special intercession of the Patriarch of Antioch who was in Moscow at the time.

As the power and dignity of the Russian Tsar increased, it seemed but fitting that his chief bishop should have a corresponding status and receive the supreme ecclesiastical title. With little difficulty this was achieved in 1589 and the title of Patriarch of Moscow was conferred upon the Metropolitan Job and subsequently recognized by the other Eastern Patriarchs.

Thus Russia became the fifth Patriarchate of the Church, and was held, in some sense, to have taken the place of Rome, which had "fallen away". The assumption of this new dignity was accompanied by the creation of a number of new Russian dioceses, and the raising of others to Metropolitan rank.

A generation later Russia again lay under the heel of an invader. The period of disturbances and civil war known as the Troublous Times brought with it foreign invasion. The Poles overran Russia and were in possession of Moscow. For sixteen months they had been laying siege to the famous Monastery of the Holy Trinity a few miles away. Then a dramatic episode occurred. In response to letters sent out from

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the Monastery a great patriotic host came to its rescue under the leadership of a prince, a butcher, a monk and a Cossack, drove out the Poles, and established Michael as the first Tsar of the House of Romanov and his father Philaret as Patriarch. The House of Romanov was to last until the collapse of imperial Russia, and the advent of the Soviets. The Patriarchate was not so long lived. But in addition to Philaret himself it produced at least one outstanding figure in the vigorous personality of Nikon.

Nikon, of peasant origin, was a rigorist, vigorous and dominating, sincere and ascetic. As head of the Chudov monastery in Moscow he had been the close friend and adviser of the Tsar Alexis, the devout son and successor of Michael, for some years, when in 1652 with a good deal of reluctance and some stipulations he yielded to the Tsar's entreaties and accepted the Patriarchal Throne. Perhaps he foresaw that his own personality and conception of his duty as Patriarch were bound to clash with those of his friend and sovereign. Such in fact proved to be the case. Nikon felt himself bound in conscience to resist the encroachments of the secular power in the realm of spiritual affairs. But at the same time he had little scruple about intruding his own will into secular matters, where his harsh severity and arrogance made him many enemies among the boyars.

There was another aspect of the troubles which were to gather around Nikon and in the end overwhelm him. It was the question of the revision of the Service books of the Church —a thorny matter on which many men both in Russia and elsewhere have pricked their fingers.

The Old Slavonic books used by the Russian Church had been translated from the Greek, and in the course of centuries of transcribing, minor errors had inadvertently crept into the text. Beside these matters there were other questions in dispute, such as whether the sign of the Cross should be made with two fingers in the Russian manner or with three as the Greeks were accustomed to make it. And how often should Alleluia be sung on certain occasions? One may be pardoned some astonishment at the fury of the passions aroused by the mere discussion of these subjects. But this is to misunderstand. Men

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excommunicated the Old Believers, deposed Nikon himself and banished him into monastic seclusion.

The line of Patriarchs continued until 1700 when Adrian the last of the original succession died. By this time the dynamic personality of Peter the Great had appeared on the scene and inaugurated a new period in Russian history. In building the city on the Neva which bore his own name he opened his famous "window upon Europe" through which a hurricane blew which disturbed, scattered and rearranged many things in the life of the Russians. Peter admired all things Western and was determined to make Russia a great nation after the pattern of the West. So far as the Russian Church was concerned Peter's reforms had little if any effect in the sphere of doctrine, but he saw to it that bishops were appointed who sympathized or at least were ready to co-operate with his critical ideas on traditional Russian customs and who were willing to acquiesce in the subservience of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to his own autocratic will. Most important of all, he permitted no election of a successor to the Patriarch Adrian, and twenty-one years later abolished the Patriarchate altogether. The formal instrument by which this change was made was entitled the "Ecclesiastical Regulation". There were to be no more Patriarchs in Russia, instead the supreme authority in the Church was to be vested in a body formed on the German Lutheran model and known as the Holy Governing Synod.

This was no synod in the ordinary ecclesiastical sense of the word, but a committee whose members were appointed and dismissed at the will of the Tsar. In addition a secular official called the Procurator was appointed by the Emperor. This layman was not indeed a member of the synod, but his function was to supervise all its proceedings, and without his consent the synod could enact nothing, nor even choose what matters it should discuss. The bishops were dragooned into acceptance of this system, completely foreign as it was to the spirit of the Russian Church. Yet Peter's organization lasted until the collapse of the Empire in 1917.

It is an eloquent testimony to the dynamic force of Peter's personality that the impetus of his reforming movement survived his death. But it introduced deep cleavages and

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confusion into Russian life. The Court and governing classes in St. Petersburg became the least Russian of all sections of the nation, indeed they were more German than Russian, and for long the reform of Peter affected only the educated classes of society. Behind the St. Petersburg façade was the great mass of the people who continued to regard everything Western with suspicion and even abhorrence. Nevertheless, the movement gradually made headway and in due course the interplay of Western ideas and native Russian thought was to produce modern Russian culture and especially the astonishing achievement of Russian nineteenth-century literature.

The "Westernizers" who believed that the destiny of Russia was to follow the path of the West, and the "Slavophils" who put their faith in the Orthodox tradition of native Russian culture, sharpened their wits upon each other in drawing-room discussions and set forth their views in books. But behind all this and but little affected by it, the religious life of the Russian people went on as before. The official Church and the majority of the hierarchy supported the Government even if they disapproved of things Western. Tsar and Metropolitan needed each other, for each believed that in the preservation of the other his own well-being was involved.

But the schism inherited from the seventeenth century still continued and the "Old Believers", among whom was conserved much that was most profound and sincere in the traditional religion of Russia, would have no truck with the St. Petersburg Empire which was anathema to them, nor with the official Church which had come to terms with it. There were in course of time many groups of these interesting schismatics, some of whom had a clergy and some had not. If sections of them degenerated into sects which were psychologically abnormal, the bulk of them, consolidated by persecution and fanatically tenacious of their beliefs, upheld a high standard of conduct and their communities were a storehouse of many significant and beautiful elements of Russian Orthodoxy. Although after 1800 some availed themselves of more generous terms offered them for reconciliation to the Church, the Old Believers exist to this day as a well-organized body of some millions under their own bishops.

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The Old Believers maintain, not without some show of reason, that it is the official Church which has left them, not *vice versa*. But in any case the vast bulk of the Russian people remained within the fold of that official Church. They lived their lives in close contact with their village churches oblivious of the disputes of Slavophils and Westernizers, pathetically constant in their belief in their Little Father, the Orthodox Tsar, and shocked but silent if they heard of time-serving prelates. Nor were men lacking to guide and uphold them. In the eighteenth century Tikhon Zadonsky is an instance of the devout hard-working and conscientious bishop by no means rare in post-Petrine Russia.[1] He stayed at his episcopal post although yearning for the life of secluded devotion for which he had to wait so many years. Some reflection of this man's personality is to be seen in the portrayal of Zossima in Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*. In the monasteries were to be found men conspicuous for their sanctity and well qualified to give advice and spiritual help to the many who sought them out. Zossima is not alone in Russian literature and the counterparts of these men in real life, such as St. Serafim of Sarov, Ambrosius of the Monastery of Optina, and many less well-known men of the kind, stand in the true line of descent from Nil Sorsky, in their spirituality and unworldliness and their essentially Russian love of freedom.

The vitality of the Russian Church during the period after Peter and especially in the nineteenth century found expression in widespread missionary activity (see below, p. 162). If the expansion of the Church took place together with the expansion of the Empire, if the missionary bishop worked hand in hand with the secular official and imposed Russian religion and Russian rule at the same time, who is to say which was the dominating motive? At any rate it cannot be said that the Russian Church was blind or indifferent to the spiritual needs of its pagan fellow subjects of the Tsar. But if the State was benevolently interested in the Church, it was determined to control it, and the position of outstanding men like Platon under Katharine II and Paul, and Philaret under Alexander I

[1] Gorodetsky: *The Humiliated Christ in Modern Russian Thought*, pp. 99 ff.

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was a difficult one, so long as they held high office. Each of these men was a thinker and theologian of distinction whose writings are regarded as having high authority in the Orthodox Church. Philaret in particular was the author of the celebrated *Confession* which bears his name and the translator into Russian of the Acts of the Synod of Jerusalem, with its important variations from the original (see p. 89). He was interested also in projects for educational and financial reform. But the autocratic action of the sovereign and the paralysing effect of the régime of the Holy Synod with its Procurator made it clear that the State must find more pliable material to fill the highest offices in the Church. Both Platon and Philaret were dismissed to their own dioceses and retired in official disgrace, although each of them continued to exercise great influence through his writing and preaching.

In the summer of 1917, between the March and October Revolutions, the All-Russian Church Council met in Moscow. Its members were both clerical and lay and representative of all classes within the Russian Church. It embarked upon the planning of a wide programme of administrative reform, it swept away Peter's Holy Governing Synod, and restored the Patriarchate of Moscow. Tikhon, Metropolitan of Moscow, whose name was soon to become well-known throughout the world, was appointed by lot from among three elected candidates, to occupy the Patriarchal Throne.

After the triumph of the Bolsheviks and the establishment of the Soviet Government, the world was startled to witness the attempt of a modern Government to suppress religion.[1] No doubt the close association of the Russian Church with the hated Tsarist régime of which it had on occasion shown itself the willing agent, helped to exacerbate the hostility with which the men who had overthrown the Tsar regarded the Church. But it is important to note that their hostility was not directed to this or that bad feature of any particular manifestation of religion, 'but against religion as such, and, if some of their spokesmen are to be believed, against "good" religion even

[1] For a balanced and judicious examination of the whole struggle, see P. B. Anderson: *People's Church and State in Modern Russia*. S.C.M. Press, 1944.

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198 more than "bad". They adopted with enthusiasm the philosophy of Karl Marx and his interpretation of history, and were sincerely convinced that the welfare of mankind necessitated the "liquidation" of religion. No effort was spared and much skill and ingenuity were employed to achieve this end. But though great suffering was caused to individual men and women, and the external organization of the Russian Church was for a time unable to function, and although large numbers of people were induced to abandon at least the outward profession of their faith, yet the lapse of time made it clear that the religion of Russia was not to be eliminated either by physical repression or by argument and propaganda, and that the secular authorities would have to come to terms with it.

•659 The process of finding a *modus vivendi* was greatly facilitated in consequence of the Second German War. When Hitler invaded Russia, the Russian Church unhesitatingly embraced its share in the sufferings of the whole people, gave its blessing to the armies which defended Russian soil and called for national solidarity under the leadership of the Soviet Government in the protection of the Fatherland. In turn the Government decided that it no longer had anything to fear from the Church and was glad to enlist its help in the conduct of the great struggle.

How far, if at all, the new relation of Church and State has been purchased by modification and adjustments of the Church's ideals and standards, time will show. The public utterances of Soviet churchmen today have nothing but thanks and congratulations to offer the secular authority. The Church, they say, is free to live its spiritual life and, what is more, always has been since the October Revolution. The outsider who reads this may be pardoned a suspicion that the lady doth protest too much and that the heroic spiritual power which held its own unbowed before the onslaughts of a foe, has to some extent succumbed to the seductive blandishments of a friend. Yet such a judgment may after all turn out to be unfounded and unfair. If the Russian Church has indeed found a way, with its spiritual integrity unimpaired, to co-operate with an atheist secular authority, not only can it do much if it will to contribute to the sorely needed understanding between Russia

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and the West, but the fruit it has produced in so much tension and suffering may be such as other parts of the Christian Church may be glad to garner in time of need.

Christianity in Russia has had a very different history from Christianity in Western countries. For long it lived its life in isolation from the West. Its clergy knew no Greek or Latin and the discussions of the Schoolmen passed them by. It had no share in Luther's Reformation or the Counter Reformation and only indirectly felt their effects. It has had, and still has, its own problem of the relation of Church and State and its own ways of dealing with the education and training of its flock. If in modern times it has relied too much upon the external support of the State, it has nevertheless known that its real strength lay in the people's natural sense of religion and the reality of spiritual things.

It is reported that an anti-religious agitator in haranguing a Russian crowd called upon God, if there were one, to strike him dead. When nothing happened he inferred to his hearers that there was no God because He had not killed him. "No," said the crowd, "He hasn't, but we will." And they did. The story, if true, illustrates also the "dionysian" element in the Russian temperament, which is so liable to sweep them into violent action and constitutes one pole in that striking dualism which runs through Russian character.

But there is better evidence of the religious spirit of the Russians in their feeling for God in nature, their sense of beauty as a link with the divine, their admiration, and in spite of all, their practice of the virtues of charity and humility. The ordinary Russian feels that he can hardly be less than charitable and forgiving in view of the shortcomings of all men before God. In spite of his own liability to outbreaks of violence, the idea of administering capital or indeed even corporal punishment in cold blood, sends a chill of revulsion through him.

There is indeed a strand in Russian religion which administers a shock of surprise to the modern Western who derives his impressions of Russia from newspaper accounts of the activities of the Russian State. Long before the Little Poor Man of Assisi changed clothes with the leper and gave his special